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# MUSIC NOTES FOR ENGINEERS

By GEORGE S. BONN, B. Ch. E. 1935

IRVING BERLIN once said, "We depend largely on tricks, we writers of songs. There's no such thing as a new melody. There has been a standing offer in Vienna, holding a large prize, to anyone who can write eight bars of original music. The offer has been up for twenty-five years. Thousands of compositions have been submitted, but all of them have been traced back to some other melody." According to Paul Whiteman, "When you are listening to your favorite jazz tune, you are most likely absorbing strains that are most classic of all the classics."

Sometimes the composers admit the sources of their inspiration, and say so on the song sheet; this was done in the case of "My Moonlight Madonna" which was merely a waltz arrangement of Fibich's "Poème," and in the case of "Moonlight and Roses" taken bodily from Edwin LeMare's "Andantino in Db" for the organ, even though Fibich and LeMare are relatively minor composers. More often, however, the song appears without credit being given to its predecessor; often, too, are law suits involving copyrights. The composer of "Avalon" was sued by Puccini to protect his melody "E Luvévan le Stelle" (The stars shone) in "La Tosca." Puccini won, and is said to have collected \$25,000 damages. Some composers keep a staff of lawyers just to take care of such matters, from either side. We shall try to use some of the better known popular songs to bridge the gap to some of the better known and more outstanding of the classical composers. Many of these comparisons have appeared elsewhere.

During the World War days, there appeared a song written by Harry Carroll which became very popular; he called it "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows," but his melody came directly from the middle of Chopin's "Fantasie Impromptu in C-sharp minor." Not very long afterwards appeared in the musical comedy "Irene," a fox-trot called "Castle of Dreams." The composer had discovered that this fellow Chopin was pretty good, so he simply took the middle part of Chopin's "Minute Waltz" and used it note for note in his own piece. "Oh, How I Miss You Tonight" came from one of Chopin's "Nocturnes;" a phrase from another one furnished the whole chorus to Vincent Rose's "Maytime."

François Frédéric Chopin was born near Warsaw, Poland, in 1809. He first played in public at the age of nine, and published his first composition at fifteen. He was the outstanding genius of the piano, and when he died in Paris from tuberculosis at the early age of thirty-nine, he left behind him several hundred compositions that will always endure. Besides the "Minute Waltz" and the "Fantasie Impromptu," listen to his "Raindrop

Prelude," "Polonaise Militaire," "Butterfly Etude," the entire sonata which contains the famous "Funeral March," "Barcarolle," and his other Preludes and Etudes, all of them descriptive and melodic. You'll like them all, whether you want to, or not.

You all remember "Horses, Horses, Silly Old Horses." Tschaikowsky, the leading Russian composer, who died in 1893, used it first in his "Troika." Sigmund Romberg's "Lover Come Back to Me" is practically the same as Tschaikowsky's "June Barcarolle," at least in the middle. When a man writes six symphonies, eleven operas, four suites, three overtures, besides a great many other piano pieces and songs, it is not difficult to believe that he was the "inspiration" for a lot more of the "modern" compositions that are so popular. When you listen to his Fifth Symphony (and you certainly ought to) watch for the rather mournful theme in the first movement; it reappears several times in the four movements. This minor motive is present in his "Marche Slav" and even in the delightful "Italian Caprice;" it is the entire main theme of the Sixth or Pathetic Symphony, considered to be the most dramatic music in modern symphonic literature. Incidentally, after Tschaikowsky had finished this Sixth Symphony, he committed suicide by walking into the Baltic Sea. He was discouraged and disrupted because of a misguided love affair with the wife of a Russian nobleman; he never once met the lady; that probably would disrupt anybody.

Besides these compositions mentioned, try to hear his "Nutcracker Suite," the incomparable "1812 Overture," the Fourth Symphony, and the "Andante Con-tabile" from the "Quartette in D;" how you can help being really ashamed of yourself for having missed them all this time, is surprising, and it will surprise you, too.

Another Russian, Rimsky-Korsakoff, gave Bob King some good ideas how "Beautiful Ohio" should be written, in the chromatic portions of his "Song of India" from the "Legend of Sadko." Cole Porter's "Night and Day" has echos of the second movement of the "Scheherazade" suite of this same Russian. The "Hymn to the Sun" from the "Coq d'Or" is very popular in its own right. Then there is Sergei Rachmaninoff, still very active on the concert stage, whose "Prelude in C-sharp minor" gives all pianists the jitters, to say nothing of discriminating audiences. If possible, listen to his "Island of the Dead," a musical portrayal of Böcklin's famous painting. Anton Rubenstein gave us, besides his "Melody in F" ("Welcome Sweet Springtime" to you) which has been thoroughly violinized, the beautiful "Kammenoi-Ostrow," a familiar organ number.